

A SWEET SALAAM NO. 3317

A SERMON
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*“He delighteth in mercy.”
Micah 7:18*

SONS of men, rejoice that such a God has revealed Himself to you! This should cause a universal Hallelujah, the whole world over, as soon as ever it is heard. “He delighteth in mercy.” Clap your hands, and rejoice before Him, yea, exceedingly rejoice!

The heathen did not find this out. Although they had gods many, differing one from another in character, none of them were ever gods of mercy. They were usually fierce demons, some of them only rejoicing in the exaction of human blood. Go at this very day to Hindustan, and see what gods man makes unto himself—gods more beastly, more cruel, more devilish than himself.

Such is not the living and true God. Far from taking pleasure in the sufferings of creatures, He tells us plainly that He delights in mercy. It is not enough that He is merciful, but He delights in this high prerogative. While we may well suppose that every attribute of God gives Him pleasure in the exercise, mercy is supremely singled out as being especially His favorite. Mercy is the last attribute openly manifested, He exercised His power in making men before they sinned or needed mercy, and He displayed His wisdom in balancing the clouds and piling the hills before He needed to show mercy, for sin as yet had not come into the world.

If I may say so, mercy is God’s Benjamin, and He delighteth most of all in it. It is the son of His right hand, though, alas! in bringing it forth, it might well have been called the son of sorrow too, for mercy came into this world through the sorrows of the only-begotten Son of God. He delights in mercy, just as some men delight in trade, some in the arts, some in professions, and each man, according to his delight, becomes proficient in pursuing a work for the very love thereof. So God is proficient in mercy. He addicts Himself to it. He is most Godlike, most happy, if such a thing may be said of Him, when He is stretching out His right hand with His golden scepter in it, and saying to the guilty, “Come to Me, touch this scepter, and you shall live!” He delighteth in mercy.

Now, surely it would suffice were I to sound this trumpet again and again with its celestial monotone. If you heard nothing but the same unvarying notes and did but remember them, believe them, and come to God in consequence of them—there would be enough of a sermon in the text, without further exposition or comment. “He delighteth in mercy.” Nevertheless, as you are willing to listen, it will not be grievous to me to speak on such a lovely theme.

Let me therefore *mention some facts which prove it, answer some objections that are raised to it, warn you against some perversions of it, and then endeavor to push home the great lessons which spring from it.*

I. FACTS WHICH PROVE THAT GOD DELIGHTETH IN MERCY.

This is clear from the first dawn of promise. When our first parents sinned, He might, if He had pleased, without straining the words which He had spoken, have destroyed them both, and so at once have put an end to the race of rebels. He had said, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” If He had chosen to give to that a literal as well as a spiritual meaning, He might justly have put on the black cap and condemned our parents to perish on the spot.

But why did He permit them to live and to become the parents of an innumerable race? Why, from that single pair, has He allowed the millions of the race to spring? Because every man that is born

becomes a sinner and in every one of these millions there is space for God's mercy—these all furnish so many platforms, I might say, on which God might display His mercy, so many millions of black foils against which God shall put the sparkling sapphire of His mercy, that its brightness may be more clearly seen. Surely, it is only because He delighteth in mercy that He spares this earth to swarm with sinners, and to be covered over with multitudes of transgressors.

That He delighteth in mercy is clear from the fact that *oftentimes after His anger has grown hot, He has spared the offender when he has repented*. God determined to destroy the race of Israel in the wilderness. "Let me alone," He said to Moses, "let me alone that I may destroy them." But the prayer of Moses touched the tender part of God, namely, His mercy, and He said that He would spare the people for His covenant and for His prophet's sake.

Even Ahab, that most cruel of kings, when he had been threatened, humbled himself, and God said to Elijah, "Go and say unto Ahab, Because he hath humbled himself, this thing shall not be in his day." And that great city of Nineveh, which had been given up to all manner of evil, God had said to Jonah, "Go and cry, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," but when they put themselves in sackcloth, and repented at the prophet's warning, the Lord would not destroy the city, but spared the multitude for a season.

Oh! I tell you the tears and cries of men move the heart of the Most High. Not a prayer ever comes from the most guilty breast, if it be but sincere, fails to enter into the ear of the God of Mercy. The tears of penitents force their way into His soul. He has a bottle for those precious drops, He has a ready record for all their groans and sighs. He has proved this in innumerable cases. He has drawn the sword from its scabbard and put it back again when the man has repented. He has lifted the axe, yet laid it down again when the husbandman has pleaded, and said, "Let it alone this year also." His sparing, even when His anger has waxed hot, proves that He delighteth in mercy.

Brethren and sisters, I appeal to all of you in this present assembly. *The fact that we are here tonight after all the provocations which we have given to God proves that He delights in mercy*. Ah! I need not begin with the worst, the openly worst, let me mention some of you who have been trained from your childhood in the paths of piety, and yet you forgot God.

You lived without Him, prayer was neglected, His day was a weariness, to go up to His house was a toil. And yet you have been spared though you were useless and unprofitable servants, He might have chased you out of the house and given you your portion among the tormenters, but He has borne with your ill manners, and spared you to this hour!

Ah, but there are some who have gone farther. They have broken His laws, they have trampled on His statutes. Some have cursed His name, some here have done it. They have dared to imprecate damnation on themselves, and have done it often. They have spoken against God, perhaps with impious and infidel lips. They have done worse than that—if worse can be—they have persecuted God's children, and that is to touch the apple of His eye, and to hurt Him in the tenderest place.

We seemed, some of us, in the days of our sin, as if we would ride steeplechase to perdition, as if nothing could stop the insanity of our suicidal resolve. We would sin, even if sin were bitter to us. We would pursue our ruin at all risks and hazards and yet He cried, "How can I give thee up?"

He turned to plead with us. A mother's voice pleaded, from the grave she pleaded. The fever came and preached to us on the sickbed and we heard it. The cholera came and preached, we heard its voice in the street, we saw its power in the frequent funerals that passed along through the city.

The preacher came and spoke as best he could, and besought you, as a brother, that you would turn, that you would not perish, but would turn to God, and all these entreaties—these stretchings out of the hand, these wooings, and these tears which God has used upon you—have all been in vain till now, and you have sinned and revolted yet more and more. Does He not delight in mercy to continue still to invite, still to mourn, and not to cut it short by destroying you altogether?

And the very best proof that God delighteth in mercy, I think, is to be found in *the great number of persons who are saved*. I say the great number of those who are saved, for he who says they be but few,

contorts some passages of God's Word, and understands it not as a whole. Look yonder, if your eyes can see as mine can, by faith, you can no more count the spirits that rejoice before the throne than you can count the stars in the sky, or the sand upon the seashore. Their music yonder is like great thunders, or like the mighty waves of the sea, for they are ten thousand times ten thousand, a company that no man can number, all having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of Jesus, all saved by the mercy of our God. And here below, how many there are of us who are making our way to the Celestial city, led by the precious Christ who is our Captain, and in every one of our cases the mercy of God is seen.

Nor is the mercy of God to be discovered only in the numbers, but it is seen also *in the character of those who are saved*, for God does not select the most virtuous, the most chaste, the most honest, the most talented. He often takes, to make them monuments of His mercy, the vilest, the most abased and blasphemous. He lays hold upon the polluted publican instead of the proud Pharisee. He singles out the wandering prodigal before many who thought themselves far better. He lifts the poor off the dunghill, and sets him among princes.

Glory be to the infinite majesty of eternal grace that has snatched brands out of the burning, that has lifted men from the very gates of hell and passed them through the gates of heaven. The guilt of one soul might sink a world, the accumulated guilt of all the millions whom Christ redeemed will stand forever as a proof that God delighteth in mercy.

Reflect a moment upon the *conduct of those saved after they have tasted that the Lord is gracious*, for albeit they are renewed, yet they are not perfect. Oh! brethren and sisters, we ought to be ashamed to have to confess it tonight, blushes should scarlet our cheeks, that we have been ungrateful, unbelieving, unfaithful. We have sinned against the gracious Father who has taken us into His family, sinned against the love of God, against the blood of Christ, against the sweet comforts of the Holy Ghost, and yet no child of His was ever cast away, no believer in Christ was ever disowned of God. The mercy which once flowed to them flows on forever, never pausing for an instant, because He delighteth in mercy.

But think, and here is the main point, think with regard to these guilty ones who have been saved, *at what an expense it was all done*. He spared not His own Son. A son is most dear to a father, yet God so loved mercy that He gave the only-begotten to the smart, and to the death-pang, to the cross and the sepulcher, that mercy might ride on the milk-white steed, a queen amongst the sons of men.

Behold the Savior bleeding! I pray you let me portray Him to you, with hands and feet pierced with nails. Mark you His sufferings, view His agonies, and let me tell you that this was all for the sons of men, that the mercy of the everlasting Father, without bound and limit, might come to those who seek His face through Jesus Christ. Further proof surely is not needed. This is proof, overwhelming proof, that should confound despair, proof that should make unbelief impossible. He who gave His son to die must be a God that delighteth in mercy.

II. SOME OBJECTIONS ARE OFTEN RAISED, which I shall very briefly meet.

"If He delighteth in mercy," says one, "*why are some men lost?*" Surely, sir, God does not so delight in mercy as to tarnish His justice. If He did, there would be a slur upon His mercy, for sometimes it is not mercy to the many to forgive the few. It were no mercy to London to set free all the burglars and garroters. It were no mercy to England if every man who has committed murder were allowed to go red-handed without punishment. Punishment for the guilty is required even by mercy itself.

Remember, of all the lost, there is not one but has simply and barely the due reward of his sins, and if that had been roughly and evenly given to him, he would have known no reprieve that allowed him to live here after his first offense. To full many of them, certainly to all of you, if finally lost, you will have had mercy presented to you. You have had Christ preached to you, you have been bidden to come to Him, you have been assured, on God's own authority, that if you trust Jesus you shall be saved. Then if you do it not, lay not your ruin at the door of God's mercy, but at the door of your own folly.

If a man die of fever because he will not take his medicine, who but he is at fault? If a man leaps over a precipice willfully, let him blame no one if he dashes himself to pieces. On the head of every lost one his own condemnation lies, as yours will, except you turn to God and repent.

“Ah!” says another, “*but God is not always merciful*, look at His severity sometimes, Korah, Dathan and Abiram are swallowed up, Sodom is destroyed by fire from heaven.” Yes, sir, and even mercy saw this done without a tear in her eye. What, should Sodom go unpunished? Shall the bestial vice of which Sodom was guilty never be checked? Why, if this should spread amongst the sons of men, it would bring in its infernal train ten thousand times more damage than the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The sin itself is infinitely worse than the fire which burned it up.

There is mercy in the physician if he sees poison in the hand when he cuts it out and cauterizes the wound, and this is what God did with Sodom. He did, as it were, cut out the plague-spot and cauterize it, lest that filthy sin should overspread all mankind. As for Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, their death was the life of others, they were pestilent traitors against the dominion of God, and unless they had died, others would have revolted and have perished too.

Many of those things which we call severe judgments are only mercies in disguise. The great fire of London—how the preachers preached about that! I suppose there are hundreds of sermons extant to prove that the great fire of London was a punishment upon London for its gluttony and covetousness.

Why, what greater blessing ever befell the city than that fire, burning up as it did all those fever and pest dens where all kinds of malaria and disease would constantly lie festering? Nothing could have been better. The deaths of some in the plague before the fire, had called attention to the evil, and then the fire came and swept the evil away. I do not doubt that even cholera in our own times has been simply God’s great sanitary commissioner, sent to London to warn us to cleanse this and sweep away that, that so on the whole life may last longer and mercy may prevail. Judge not God then, by your feeble sense, wait awhile till you see His judgments in the long run, and then you shall discern how they are always seasoned with mercy, and love holds the sword.

Should anyone say, with blank surprise, “If God delighteth in mercy, *why is there such a thing as the unpardonable sin?*” I think I should reply, with a burst of gratitude, “Is it not a great mercy that there is only one sin that is unpardonable?” There might have been a catalog of crimes for which forgiveness was impossible, there is but one, that one is only unpardonable because the person who commits it has so seared his conscience that he never sues for pardon. Any of you, man or woman, that asks for mercy sincerely, shall have it, whatever sin you may have committed. But that one sin strikes a cold chill about the heart, and henceforth the man never desires mercy, but perishes an impenitent and a careless sinner.

Should another say, “How is God merciful, *when I feel in my own self that He cannot have mercy upon me?*” I should reply, Your feelings are not to be trusted. Whatever despair may whisper, or doubt may suggest, one text of Scripture is worth fifty fears and doubts, or fifty thousand either. You may be a black sinner, but He delights to wash you. You may have offended Him, year after year, and done despite to His grace, but His arm is still not shortened that He cannot save. I care not how far you may have gone, I am sure He can come after you.

Lost sheep, bleating on the mountains, the Shepherd can hear you, and the Shepherd can reach you. You may fall into a pit, but it shall not be so deep that He cannot bring you out. While life remains there is hope. Sin as you may have sinned, there is abundance of pardon with a gracious God.

Oh, put not your thought so in opposition to the declaration of heaven, but believe tonight that God is able and willing to forgive you, and come with a penitent’s prayer, and find forgiveness now. All objections to the delight of God in mercy are but illusions of your brain, or delusions of your heart.

III. THERE IS PERIL OF MISUSING THIS MERCY OF GOD, lest instead of leading us to repentance, it should plunge us deeper into sin.

Though God delights in mercy, sin is no trifle in His estimation. Sin is an enormous evil, an evil so great that it never could have been prevented from destroying us all, except by God Himself coming into this world, taking upon Himself our nature, and suffering to the very death in our stead. Calvary tells us

that sin is not a thing to be laughed at. It cost our Savior groans unutterable, and griefs that never can be measured, to deliver us from our guilt, and if the sinner come not to Christ, it shall cost him endless tears. It shall cost him everlasting misery, His sins shall sink him to hell forever. Oh! trifle not with sin because God is merciful. This is a cruel, brutal thing to do, to sin because grace doth abound. If you do so, you shall find that there is no grace for you.

Say not that because God is merciful *a prayer or two on your dying bed will suffice*. How do you know you may ever have a dying bed? Men fall dead in the streets. There was one who always said, "I shall set it all right at last, I shall say, 'Lord, have mercy upon me,' and it will be all right." Returning home drunk one night, he spurred his horse over the parapet of a bridge into a deep river, and the last word he was heard to say was a sentence too blasphemous for me to repeat.

And why may not you die so? You cannot tell. Put no trust in deathbed repentances, they are of all things the most deceitful. Every thief repents when he comes to the prison, and every murderer will leave a word of repentance on his pathway to the gallows. It is no sign of the heart being set right to cry and groan when you are coming near to your punishment. God is merciful to these who seek Him early, but procrastinators will find that He is just. "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest."

Though God is merciful *you are not therefore at liberty to despise the Lord Jesus and His salvation*, for all His mercy flows to us through the silver pipe of Jesus Christ the Mediator. I speak advisedly, there is no mercy in heaven or earth in the shape of saving mercy, except through Jesus Christ. Unless you come to the cross for it you shall not have it. God has nailed up every other door but this. This one alone is left open, the door sprinkled with blood on the lintel and the two side posts, and on which is written, "Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall never perish, but have everlasting life."

There is an alternative. It is, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." What, if he does this and that, or if he humble himself, if he be virtuous? Yes, yes. God makes no exception. The sentence comes to kings and queens and emperors as well as to crossing sweepers, paupers, or even to convicts, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." They shall take which they will. If they will have Christ and God's mercy, so be it, God's grace has compelled them to take that. But if they will not have Christ, there is no mercy, no, not a drop of mercy, but wrath, righteous wrath, against those that despise the Son of God.

Nor must you think that *the doctrine of God's free mercy at all comes into conflict with the doctrine of God's electing love*. Nay, rather, by His election it is seen that God delighteth in mercy—thinking of mercy, planning mercy before men needed mercy, in the eternal covenant determining the persons upon whom mercy should come, selecting them, not because of any good in themselves, but entirely out of His own good pleasure, and thus proving His mercy.

If God had sent into the world a gospel full of conditions and of human doings, it would have been no Gospel to anybody, for no man could fulfill the conditions except by divine grace. But He has sent an unconditional Gospel. He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion upon whom He will have compassion, and in this great free grace Gospel the mercy of God is magnified to the fullest.

IV. WHAT IS THE LESSON FROM ALL THIS?

If God be so merciful let His ministers preach of His mercy. If God delights in mercy and not in sacrifice, do not let His ministers be dressing themselves up, and performing genuflections, bowing to the east, winking with their eyes, making signs with their fingers, offering incense, and I know not what besides. God is not a child to be amused with toys that are beneath the notice of babes.

God delighteth in mercy. Let the pulpit, therefore, ring with mercy. Let the preacher be continually telling of mercy through the blood of Jesus, mercy through faith in His name, mercy for crimes of deepest dye, mercy that comes to us through the atoning Savior. This ought to be our daily message when we preach. We ought to remember that God delighteth in mercy. As God's ambassadors let us proclaim most freely that which He has the most pleasure in, His mercy—His mercy—oh, His mercy, it endures forever.

Christian people, here is a noble example for you. If God delights in mercy, and you are His children, *be like Him, let mercy be your delight*. Be merciful to the poor. Be merciful to the ignorant. Be merciful to the guilty. Never be the man to cast the first stone at the fallen woman, for your Master did not condemn her. Never be the man to pass by the naked and the poverty-stricken. Your Lord's eye was quick to detect the leper. Mercy well becomes the heir of the God of mercy, and if you are not merciful how can you expect to obtain mercy, or think to be numbered among the children of the great merciful One?

To all of you I would say—take care, as you expect the mercy of God, to deal it out to others. Never say, “I won't forgive,” for you seal your own condemnation when you do, and if you forgive not your brother his trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive you. You have chosen your own destruction when you shut the door against your child, or against your neighbor, and say, “I will treasure up that enmity as long as I live.” I tell you, sirs, your offerings at God's altar are an abomination to Him until you have forgiven every one of your fellows his trespasses. Your prayers cannot come up before God, they are hindered most effectually.

How can you pray when one of the petitions which God puts into your mouth is this, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive them that are indebted unto us”? How can you, with one hand on your brother's throat, lift your other hand and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? Go your way tonight, and if possible before you close your eyes in sleep make your peace with any whom you have offended or who have offended you. As God delighteth in mercy, let the children of God delight in mercy likewise.

Still, the great lesson I want to bring out is this—if *God delights in mercy, then why should those who have offended Him be afraid to seek Him?* He will hear your prayers be they ever so feeble or broken. He is ready to forgive you, however grossly you may have offended. Think of that. If He be so kind, why do you stay away from Him?

Oh! come to Him, come now. 'Tis all mercy today. You are not bidden to come to a judge, nor to advance to the bar where the sentence shall go against you, 'tis a sweeter note you hear, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Oh! I wish I could lead you to the Lord. It is not in my power. His Spirit alone can do it, but oh! do come, and welcome. There is not a hard word in the whole of the Bible for a coming sinner. There is nothing to keep back a soul that desires to be at peace with God. God's house is open, God's heart is open, God's table is spread, God waits to be gracious—nay, He comes to meet the sinner that comes to Him. Are you willing to have Him and to have His mercy? If so, you may have it. Come, then, come and welcome, sinner, come!

*“Lord, Thou hast won, at length I yield,
My heart, by mighty grace compelled
Surrenders all to Thee;
Against Thy terrors long I strove,
But who can stand against Thy love?
Love conquers even me.*

*If Thou hast bid Thy thunders roll,
And lighting's flash to blast my soul,
I still had stubborn been;
But mercy has my heart subdued,
A bleeding Savior I have viewed,
And now I hate my sin.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 136 AND EPHESIANS 1

Let us make this occasion a time of praise and thanksgiving, let our hearts dance at the name of our God, let our lips give expression thereto, in joyful music.

Verse 1. *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

That is the beginning of our praise, the essential goodness of God, from which all the streams of mercy flow. Oh, deep abyss of infinite love.

2-3. *O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

His greatness, which is beyond that of all potentates on earth or principalities in heaven—this also is to be our joyous theme of song. His greatness and His goodness together make us magnify His name.

4. *To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Nothing is absolutely wonderful except God, and all other things are dwarfed and diminished in wondrousness as compared with Him. The Seven Wonders of the World are trifles compared with the seven-million wonders of God.

5. *To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

They boasted of the Colossus that strode across the sea, but what shall we say to the heavens that span not only the earth but all the universe? And in those heavens there is mercy to be seen as well as wisdom, the adaptation of the physical world to the circumstances of man, so that there is a relation between the weight of every dewdrop and the structure of the human body.

6-9. *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever: The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever: The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

See how these ancient godly ones loved to dwell upon a thing. When the note was “light” they did not just sing it through and have done with it, but there were fugues and repeats in their music, but the music of today is “rattle through it as fast as ever you can, and have done quickly, with it.” Our forefathers liked to linger a bit on these sweet praises of God. So did the Hebrews. “Great lights!” Aye, but there must be the sun and the moon and the stars. They could never have enough of it, they rolled these sweet morsels under their tongue and then out upon their lips as they praised God.

10. *To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Yet it was an awful judgment, and it needs a reverent, lowly, saintly spirit to sing over even the judgments of God. Had certain theologians of the present time been present at the Red Sea they would have cried in sentimental sympathy over the Egyptians, but instead of that Miriam took a timbrel and said, “Sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously.” The fates of sinful men are of small moment as compared with the glory of God. JEHOVAH fills all things, and when the heart is fully taken up with the glory of God, it learns to sing even this stern refrain, “To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

11-15. *And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever: with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever: and made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever: but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

See how they prolonged the strain, and what blessed exercise this is, to take mercies to pieces and examine all the details, and have a fresh verse for each particular of God’s goodness to us. Glory be unto His blessed name forever and ever.

16. *To him which led his people through the wilderness; for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Therefore He will lead you through the wilderness, and bring you through great droughts, and your manna shall drop from heaven, and your waters flow from the rock. Sing then to His name, ye that are in the wilderness.

17. *To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:*

That is a terrible and tragic matter, that smiting of kings. Yes, but these singers did not groan over it. There are no less than four notes over this.

18-23. *And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever: and Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever: and gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever: even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:*

The note descends a little from the martial strain of trumpet, from smitten kings and the drowned chivalry of Egypt, but though it sinks, how it sweetens! What a soft, clear sound there is about it.

24-26. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Glorious redemption! That is ever the choicest note of all. Ring that silver bell again.

This is the Christian's true promised land of great spiritual blessings. May we have faith enough to enter into the full possession of it. It is a very wonderful chapter.

Ephesians Chapter 1. Verses 1-2. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

That is a sort of crossing of the Jordan to go into the land and get grace and peace. Grace changes us, peace quiets us, and then we are over Jordan.

3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

They are all yours. He has not blessed you with a part of the blessings, but with all of them, they are all yours. Have you the courage and the faith to take possession of them? That is the point. If you have grace and peace you are in the land. Now let your foot rest first on one blessing and then on another and appropriate them all to yourself.

4. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

What an inheritance! To be made holy. Oh, that we might be perfected as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, sanctified through and through! We are elected to this end, it is the very objective of the divine choice that we may be without blame before Him in love.

5-6. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

See how Paul goes on taking one city after another of this heavenly Canaan. It was election, now it is adoption, now it is acceptance in the Beloved. He is a good Joshua for us if we will but really and truly follow him, and take possession of the promised land.

7-10. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

Oh, what a wonderful gathering that will be when all the things in Christ shall be gathered together, no division among the people of God, when the whole redeemed inheritance shall be one, and we shall as one body possess it forever. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Got it. God has given it to us, we have a right to it, we are the heirs of it in Christ.

11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

He not only wills it, but He works it. When He wills to give His people a broad inheritance, of that large inheritance they shall certainly have, for He “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

12-14. *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

You have got the Holy Spirit. He is God’s seal upon you, that you are indeed saved men and women. In getting that you have already received the earnest, that is, a part of the inheritance never to be taken back. A pledge has to be restored, but an earnest is kept forever, the Spirit of God is ours, and in having Him we have all things.

15-16. *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

Having got so much, you might get a great deal more.

17-18. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*

That is a wonderful passage, we are not only to know our inheritance in God, but God’s inheritance in us. Wonderful thing, and yet it is so. The Lord’s portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. Joshua gave each one of the people his own portion, but all the people were God’s portion. And today God delights in His people, He finds a solace in those whom He chose, in those whom He redeemed by blood, in those whom He brought near into daily fellowship with Himself.

19-23. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

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